

Kim Petras: “If you think I ruined my life, that’s fine – I’m going to write songs about it”

The German pop star reflects on 10 hard-fought years in the music industry in her most personal album yet

By **Alex Rigotti** | 2nd June 2026



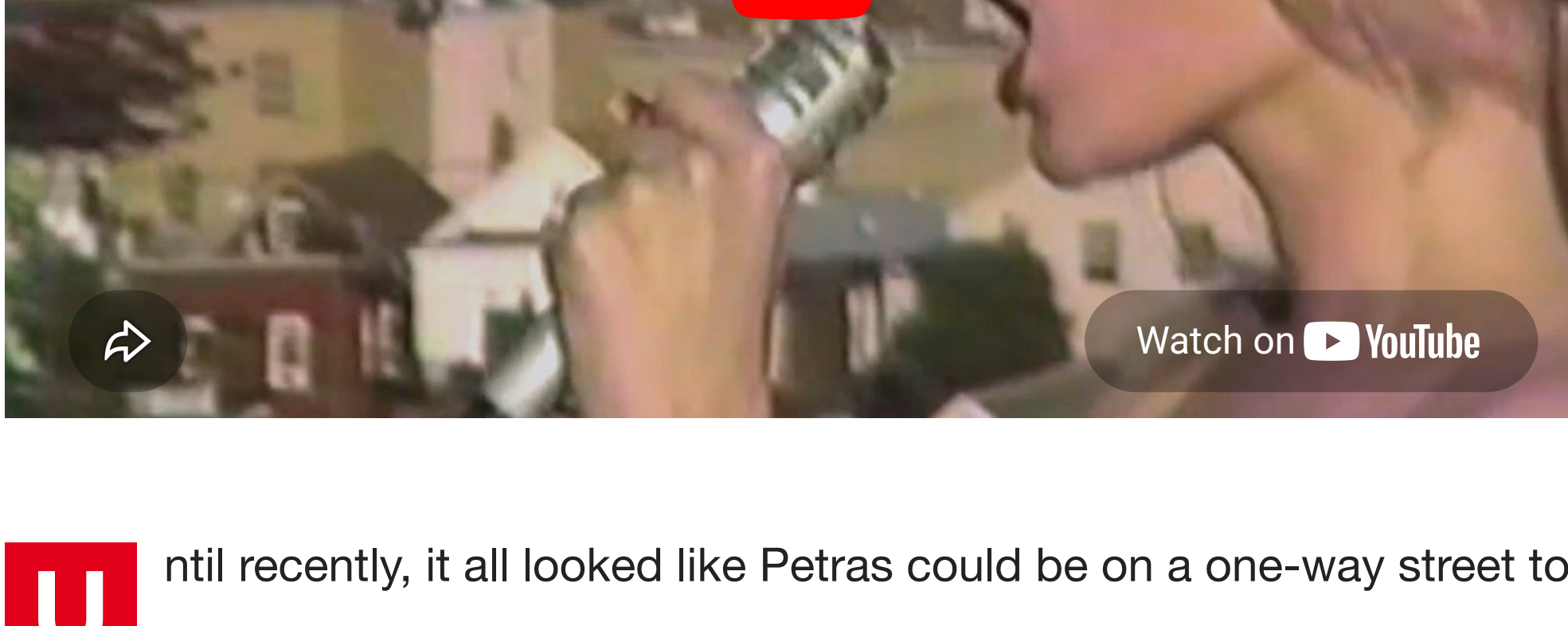
Kim Petras credit: Cameron Ditsell

What’s left to learn about **Kim Petras**? The German-born, LA-based pop star has conducted TV interviews since she was a preteen and has been interviewed by every magazine imaginable throughout adulthood. And yet, she remains an enigma in her music, preferring to express herself through a roster of personas in her music. Well, until now.

“I’ve done this hypersexual girl, someone who kills men, a European girl who goes to LA and wants to do drugs,” she reels off in her slight German lilt over Zoom at her house. Petras finally released her new album ‘Detour’ last week. The record still plays with the pop star’s long-established characters – except this time, “the real self catches up with me, and the song takes a detour”.

On top of Petras’ renewed zeal for songwriting, the album also represents a complete overhaul of her life. Last January, she requested her label, Republic Records, drop her over delays in releasing the record, declaring: “I’m tired of having no control over my own life or career.” Now, after reviving her own label BunHead Records, Petras is ready to share her most honest, abrasive project yet, even if it means she crashes and burns.

“I played this character and thought that was a way to get through all of this, but you can’t escape self-reflection and change”, she warns. “I was making music that I physically couldn’t perform, and I was like: I need to get this out. I need to be truthful to who I am right now.”



Until recently, it all looked like Petras could be on a one-way street to disaster. After her feature on **Sam Smith**’s ‘Unholy’ became an unexpected hit in 2022, topping the charts and making Petras the first openly trans woman to win a Grammy, she swiftly found herself in a frenzy. The pressure was on to capitalise on that sudden success with her first major label project and 2023 debut album: the aptly-titled ‘**Feed The Beast**’.

“It is so not cohesive,” Petras reflects on the record now. “Songs are on there because it was political: ‘This person needs this many credits, so pick from these songs.’ I was really overwhelmed, and you can hear that mad spiral of all these opinions.” In fact, Petras empathises with fans disappointed in the record. “Like, you know what? I feel the same way about this! How did this happen?” she laughs good-naturedly.

‘Feed The Beast’ was considered a critical and commercial flop. The label sent Petras back to the drawing board, but all that was coming out were uninspiring pop songs. Out of frustration, she covertly wrote ‘Detour’ with producers **Frost Children** (**Danny Brown**, **Porter Robinson**) and Margo XS (**Zara Larsson**, **Demi Lovato**). They wrote the record during nighttime sessions, all collectively energised by the freedom of “trashy” EDM.

The songs on ‘Detour’ mutate as internal crises chafe against outward facades, like a monster bulging underneath its human disguise. ‘Jeep’ pits wistful strummed guitars against Petras’ vocals, AutoTuned into oblivion as she pleads for a lover to reconcile with her: “The vocals are very synthetic – that really explains this character, feeling like a robot who’s customisable.”

“My definition of success is doing the right things for the art, and that’s what’s driving me entirely now”

Meanwhile, ‘Polo’ miraculously Frankensteins Danity Kane harmonies, **Soulja Boy** grooves and a woozy reggae break as an expression of Petras’ seething fury following a meeting gone awry at Beverly Hills hotspot, the Polo Lounge. “I felt so mad at being told what to wear and what image to be,” she recalls. “I don’t belong in a Polo Lounge! We wanted to portray morphing into something new out of all the people who tell you what to wear.”

Narratively, Petras’ character also changes at a whiplash pace. On pop banger ‘Need For Speed’, Petras revels in the whirlwind pop star lifestyle, but mournfully confesses: “*You really don’t know me, no one really knows me / Yeah, you should know, I want you to know me...*” It’s a rather dark and personal turn for Petras, who has long disavowed “talk-about-your-feelings pop”. But it’s a side she’s tired of suppressing; ‘Detour’, she says, represents how she truly feels most of the time. “The extreme confidence I have on stage has a price I pay afterwards. That’s the side I’ve been missing in my music: the fabulous pop star against a whole different beast.”

As Petras pulls back more of the curtain on ‘Detour’, she offers fans a rare glimpse into her childhood in Germany. Over a chugging Kraftwerkian beat on ‘Brutalist’, she depicts the long road trips she’d take aged 10 with her architect father to find hormone therapy, Petras Sr. critiquing the concrete buildings they’d spot.

“‘Brutalist’ is a very current story for me because there’s so much conversation about child transitioning being looked down upon as something that’s not necessary,” she says. “For me, it definitely was. People think they know better about your body; what you and your parents decide is the right thing to do. It’s so crazy to ban that and go against licensed psychologists. Even other trans artists have talked about me promoting child transitioning and being wrong for that! If you think I ruined my life, that’s fine – I’m going to write songs about it.”

“‘Brutalist’ is a very current story for me because there’s so much conversation about child transitioning being looked down upon as something that’s not necessary,” she says. “For me, it definitely was. People think they know better about your body; what you and your parents decide is the right thing to do. It’s so crazy to ban that and go against licensed psychologists. Even other trans artists have talked about me promoting child transitioning and being wrong for that! If you think I ruined my life, that’s fine – I’m going to write songs about it.”



Kim Petras credit: Charlie McHenry

Petras has long been open about her transness, but its relationship to her art has long been complicated. She recalls going to major labels earlier in her career, who either wanted to make her the First Trans Pop Star, hide the fact entirely, or ask invasive questions about her life. “I certainly don’t want to be anyone’s little puppet just because it’s a big deal people would want to work with me because I’m ‘trans scum’ – that’s what it felt like in the beginning”, she remembers.

A lot has changed since those days. Petras’s early embrace of hyperpop alongside pioneering producer **SOPHIE** defined the genre as a trans-inclusive space. Now, a whole wave of trans and nonbinary musicians have flourished – including Frost Children and Margo XS. Fittingly, ‘Detour’ will also feature the final song Petras made with SOPHIE, who died in a tragic accident in 2021: the sweet, innocent ‘Basketball’. “It does feel really sad that we won’t make more music,” Petras admits, a subtle crack in her voice. “That was my first experience ever losing a friend and collaborator.

“I’m so proud to have the song,” she adds. “It reminds me of the time we got to spend together and the shared vision of what music should feel like. The softness and childlikeness of this song is so special: talking about a basketball game, sampling the sound of a rubber basketball... it feels, yes, sad, but amazing that this song gets to come out, because it’s a really special one.”

The song is especially pertinent to ‘Detour’, Petras continues, due to SOPHIE’s unwavering support when industry politics became exhausting. “One of the things that I talked about with SOPHIE a lot was getting free from the situation I was in, and we would plot,” Petras adds. “I’m doing what SOPHIE told me I could always do – and honestly, so did **Charli [XCX]**. They were always like: ‘You can do it on your own, just believe in yourself.’ This song coming out in this way feels really beautiful and full circle: I finally did the thing my friends encouraged me to do.”

‘Detour’ is proof of Petras’ lifelong tenacity and chutzpah. She might be veering off the course laid out for her, but she knows exactly where she’s going. “I don’t feel successful with music that’s doing great numbers, but isn’t a cohesive project or an art piece,” she says. “My definition of success has changed – it’s not doing everything, it’s doing the right things for the art, and that’s what’s driving me entirely now. I’ll do anything and sacrifice anything to be able to do that.”

“I’m so proud to have the song,” she adds. “It reminds me of the time we got to spend together and the shared vision of what music should feel like. The softness and childlikeness of this song is so special: talking about a basketball game, sampling the sound of a rubber basketball... it feels, yes, sad, but amazing that this song gets to come out, because it’s a really special one.”

The song is especially pertinent to ‘Detour’, Petras continues, due to SOPHIE’s unwavering support when industry politics became exhausting. “One of the things that I talked about with SOPHIE a lot was getting free from the situation I was in, and we would plot,” Petras adds. “I’m doing what SOPHIE told me I could always do – and honestly, so did **Charli [XCX]**. They were always like: ‘You can do it on your own, just believe in yourself.’ This song coming out in this way feels really beautiful and full circle: I finally did the thing my friends encouraged me to do.”

‘Detour’ is proof of Petras’ lifelong tenacity and chutzpah. She might be veering off the course laid out for her, but she knows exactly where she’s going. “I don’t feel successful with music that’s doing great numbers, but isn’t a cohesive project or an art piece,” she says. “My definition of success has changed – it’s not doing everything, it’s doing the right things for the art, and that’s what’s driving me entirely now. I’ll do anything and sacrifice anything to be able to do that.”

Kim Petras’ ‘Detour’ is out now via BunHead Records.

RELATED TOPICS

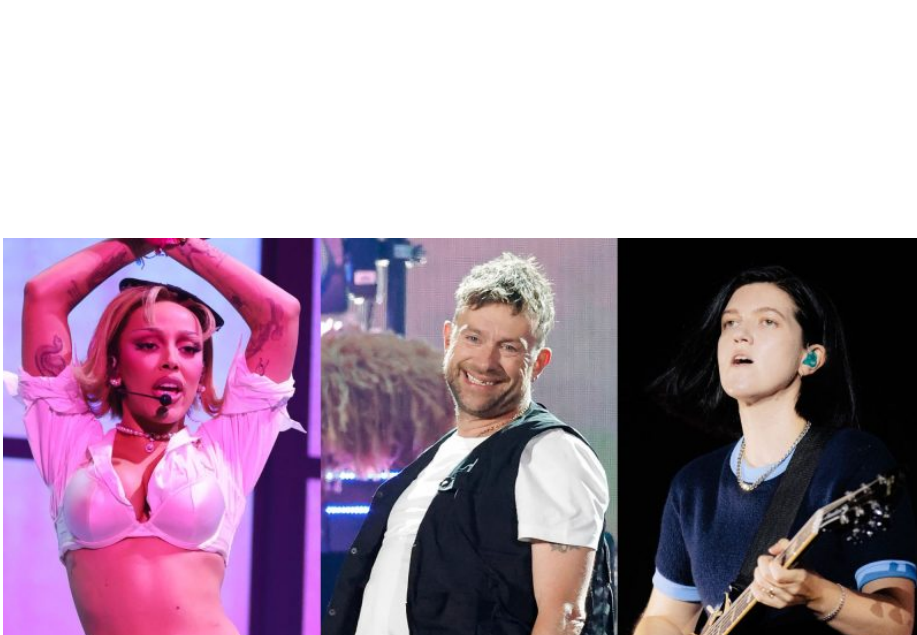
- Kim Petras
- Pop

MORE STORIES



FILM NEWS

Taylor Swift confirms new song ‘I Knew It. I Knew You’ will appear in ‘Toy Story 5’



MUSIC NEWS

Charli XCX announces new album ‘Music, Fashion, Film’



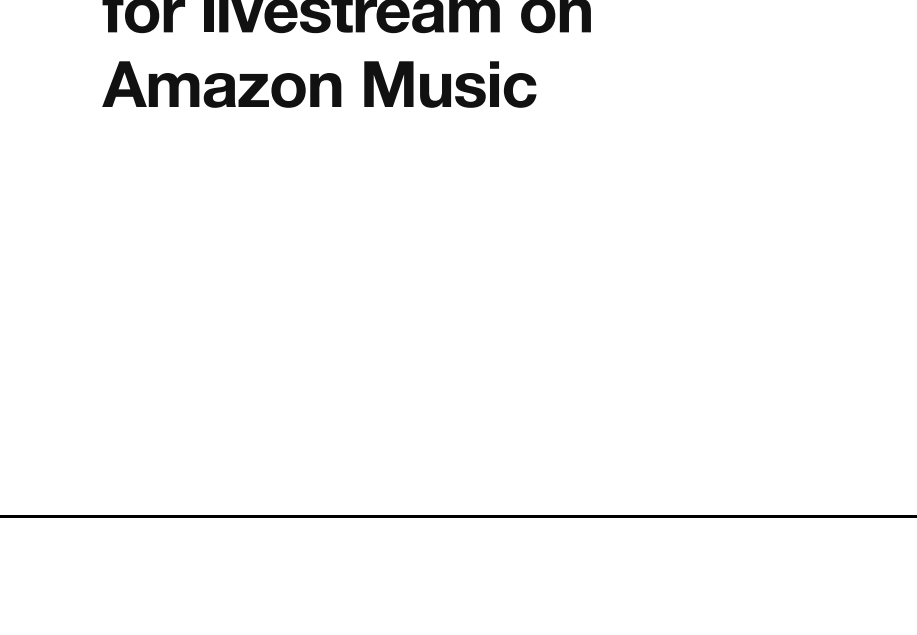
FILM NEWS

Is Taylor Swift involved in ‘Toy Story 5’? Rumours start up again as fans decode cryptic billboard and lyric clue



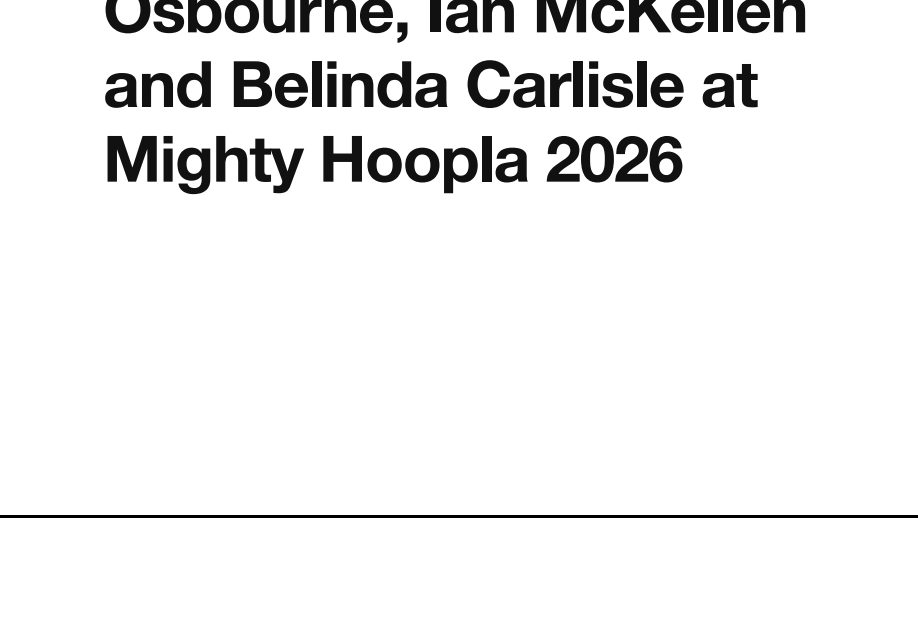
MUSIC NEWS

Duran Duran announce 2026 UK arena tour



MUSIC NEWS

Primavera Sound 2026: Artist line-up revealed for livestream on Amazon Music



MUSIC NEWS

Watch Scissor Sisters bring out Kelly Osbourne, Ian McKellen and Belinda Carlisle at Mighty Hoopla 2026

YOU MAY ALSO LIKE